

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 03443 270934Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3513
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3443

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR CA KS UN
SUBJ: REPUBLIC OF KOREA (ROK) AMBASSADOR TO CANADA, HAN PYONG-KI

REF: USUN 1071

SUMMARY: KOREAN PAPERS ANNOUNCED APPOINTMENT OF HAN PYONG-KI AS AMBASSADOR TO CANADA ON 17 APRIL. CANADIANS WERE CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBILITY HAN WOULD BE CONNECTED WITH JUSTICE DEPARTMENT PROBE OF KCIA ACTIVITIES IN U.S., BUT NOW ASSURED HAN NOT SUBJECT OF INVESTIGATION. NOTHING IN EMBASSY FILES INDICATES HAN IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH KCIA. END SUMMARY.

1. ANNOUNCEMENT OF UN DEPUTY AMBASSADOR HAN PYONG-KI'S APPOINTMENT AS ROK AMBASSADOR TO CANADA APPEARED IN LOCAL PRESS ON 17 APRIL. HAN'S APPOINTMENT AS NOTED IN PRESS WAS PART OF GENERAL RESHUFFLING OF AMBASSADORIAL POSTINGS WITH FIVE OTHERS MENTIONED AND TEN MORE AWAITING AGREEMENT. MOST ARTICLES GAVE SHORT BIOGRAPHIC STATEMENT MENTIONING THAT HAN WAS FORMER ROK LEGISLATOR WHO PREVIOUSLY SERVED IN CONSULAR OFFICE NEW YORK AND AMBASSADOR TO CHILE PRIOR TO UN ASSIGNMENT.

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2. CANADIAN FIRST SECRETARY IN SEOUL, GEOFFREY CHARLEBOIS, ASSURED EMBOFF THAT CANADIANS HAVE NO RESERVATIONS CONCERNING APPOINTMENT OF HAN. THEY ARE AWARE OF CHARGES AS APPEARED IN U.S. AND CANADIAN PRESS THAT HAN LINKED WITH KCIA BUT COULD FIND NO GROUNDING TO THESE ALLEGATIONS THAT WOULD PREVENT AGREEMENT. CHARLEBOIS MENTIONED THAT

CANADIAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON CHECKED WITH UNNAMED U.S. OFFICIALS AND INFORMED OTTAWA THAT HAN WAS NOT UNDER INVESTIGATION BY DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. CANADIAN EMBASSY DID ACCEDE THAT AGREEMENT TOOK LONGER THAN NORMAL, BUT THIS ONLY PARTLY DUE TO HAN/KCIA COLLABORATION ALLEGATION, THE REST BEING PURELY BUREAUCRATIC.

3. EMBASSY FILES ON HAN REVEAL NO INDICATION OF LINKS WITH KCIA. HE ENTERED ROK ARMY AS OFFICER IN 1953 FOLLOWING STUDY AT CENTRAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN SEOUL AND SHORT PRIOR SERVICE IN KOREAN NATIONAL POLICE. IN ARMY HE WAS AIDE TO PRESIDENT PAK CHONG-HUI WHILE LATTER WAS COMMANDER OF 5TH ROK DIVISION, AND MARRIED PAK'S DAUGHTER BY A FIRST MARRIAGE IN 1958. AFTER PAK BECAME PRESIDENT HAN LEFT THE MILITARY, SERVING AS POLITICAL OFFICER AT ROK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON IN 1961 AND AS ROK CONSUL IN NEW YORK IN 1962. HE RECEIVED A MASTERS DEGREE FROM FARLEIGH DICKENSON IN 1966, RETURNED TO ROK AND BECAME PRESIDENT OF SAMYANG NAVIGATION COMPANY IN 1968 AND WAS ELECTED TO 8TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN 1971. APPOINTED ROK AMBASSADOR TO CHILE IN 1974, HE LATER ASSUMED UN POST IN JUNE 1975.

4. BLUE HOUSE SECRETARY AND FORMER SCHOOLMATE OF HAN'S CLAIMS HE ATTEMPTED TO DISCOURAGE HAN FROM ENTERING POLITICS SOME YEARS AGO, CITING POSSIBLE CHARGES OF NEPOTISM AS PRESIDENTIAL SON-IN-LAW, BUT WAS SEVERELY REBUKED BY HAN. YEARS LATER HAN ADMITTED TO THIS OFFICIAL THAT HE WOULD HAVE DONE BETTER IF HE HAD REMAINED A CONFIDENTIAL

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BUSINESSMAN. ACCORDING TO SAME SOURCE HAN IS ONE OF HANDFUL WHO HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO PRESIDENT PAK AND NOT AFRAID TO TELL HIM TRUTH. SOURCE WENT ON TO SAY THAT CONTRARY TO ALLEGATION OF HAN'S COMPLICITY WITH KCIA, HE WAS THE MAN WHO FINALLY MADE CLEAR TO THE PRESIDENT THE EXTENT OF KCIA BRIBERY ATTEMPTS IN THE U.S. SNEIDER

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Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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